WE CLAIM:

1. A video system comprising a video-on-demand server and a remote client, the server employing a server communications protocol, the client

5 employing a client communications protocol, the system further including a proxy interposed between the server and the client, the proxy including means for translating between the server and client communications protocols, wherein the server and client can communicate through the proxy even if the server and client protocols are different, and wherein change to either the server or client protocol

10 can be accommodated by a change to the proxy rather than to the client or server, respectively.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein the proxy further includes means for translating between at least one of said client and server communications protocols

15 and a third protocol different from said client and server communications protocols, wherein the same proxy can be used in different server/client environments.

3. The system of claim 1 wherein the proxy includes means for ameliorating aberrant behavior in at least one of said server or client.

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4. The system of claim 3 wherein the proxy includes means for detecting a predetermined input communication in an input protocol, and issuing an output communication in an output protocol that does not exactly correspond to the input communication.

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5. In a video-on-demand application including plural user terminals and an infrastructure linking the terminals to one or more video servers, a method comprising:

presenting a user interface on a screen associated with one of said terminals, the user interface comprising plural elements;

specifying a first group of user interface elements in accordance with first instructions stored in the user terminal; and

5   specifying a second group of user interface elements in accordance with second instructions received by the user terminal from the infrastructure.

6.   The method of claim 5 further comprising providing a proxy as part of the infrastructure, and issuing said second instructions from the proxy.

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7.   The method of claim 5 wherein the first and second user interface elements are presented at different times.

8.   The method of claim 5 wherein the first group of user interface elements
15 include controls for video-on-demand playback, and the second group of user interface elements include controls for video-on-demand selection.

9.   The method of claim 5 wherein the second instructions include graphic data, the method including using said graphic data for logo branding of the user
20 interface.

10. The method of claim 5 comprising interrupting delivery of an on-demand video in response to a user command input through one of said first group of user interface elements, and presenting a screen display including at least one of said
25 second group of user interface elements in response.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said screen display indicates whether the viewer has electronic mail waiting.

12. The method of claim 10 wherein said screen display indicates time remaining for the interrupted on-demand video.

5   13. In a video-on-demand application having a client coupled to a server, the system including a user interface component, an improvement comprising interposing between the client and the server an intermediary processor, and distributing at least part of the user interface component between the client and the intermediary processor.

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14. The system of claim 13 further including a security component, the method including distributing at least part of the security component to the intermediary processor.

15   15. The system of claim 13 further including a failover component, the method including distributing at least part of the failover component to the intermediary processor.

16. The system of claim 13 wherein the intermediary serves as a protocol

20 converter between the client and server.

Sub B² 17. In a video-on-demand application including plural clients coupled to at least one video server through an infrastructure, the infrastructure defining plural transmission channels, the infrastructure further including an intermediary

25 processor, a method comprising:

assigning a first transmission channel to a first client to transmit an on-demand video thereto;

assigning a second transmission channel to a second client to transmit an on-demand video thereto; and

employing the intermediary processor to manage said assignment of channels to clients.

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18. The method of claim 17, including employing the intermediary processor to reassign the first client to a third transmission channel at a point between the beginning and end of the first client's on-demand video, so as to manage channel resources.

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19. The method of claim 17 wherein the clients and server employ different communication protocols, and the intermediary processor effects conversion between said protocols.

15   20. In a video-on-demand application including plural clients coupled to a primary video server through an infrastructure, the infrastructure including a proxy, the system further comprising at least one backup video server, a method comprising:

using said proxy as a firewall between the clients and the video servers; and

20   also using said proxy to manage redirection of video sourcing from the primary video server to the backup video server in the event of failure of the primary video server.

21. The method of claim 20, further comprising using the proxy to specify 25 at least a portion of a user interface presented on a client display.

22. In a video-on-demand application including plural clients coupled to a video server through an infrastructure, the infrastructure including a proxy, the video server including plural video storage systems, a method comprising:

using said proxy as a firewall between the clients and the video servers; and

5   also using said proxy to manage load distribution among said plural video storage systems.

23. The method of claim 22, further comprising using the proxy to specify at least a portion of a user interface presented on a client display.

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24. In a video-on-demand application including plural clients coupled to at least one video server through an infrastructure, an improvement comprising:

providing an intermediary processor in the infrastructure; and

initiating delivery of promotional video to a client from the intermediary

15 processor.

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